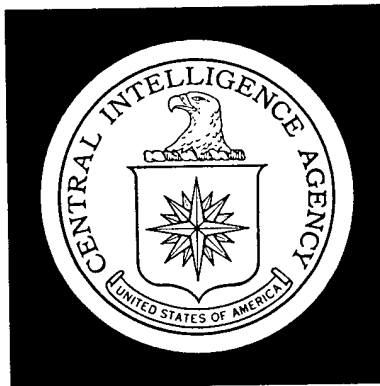


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WEEKLY REVIEW

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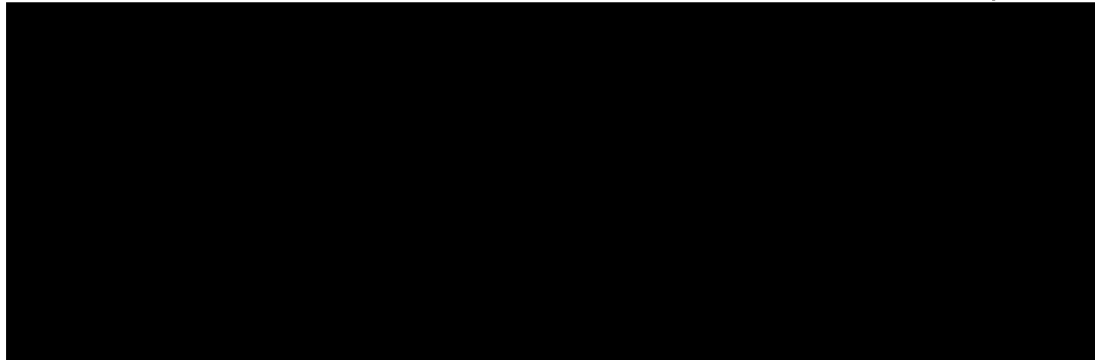
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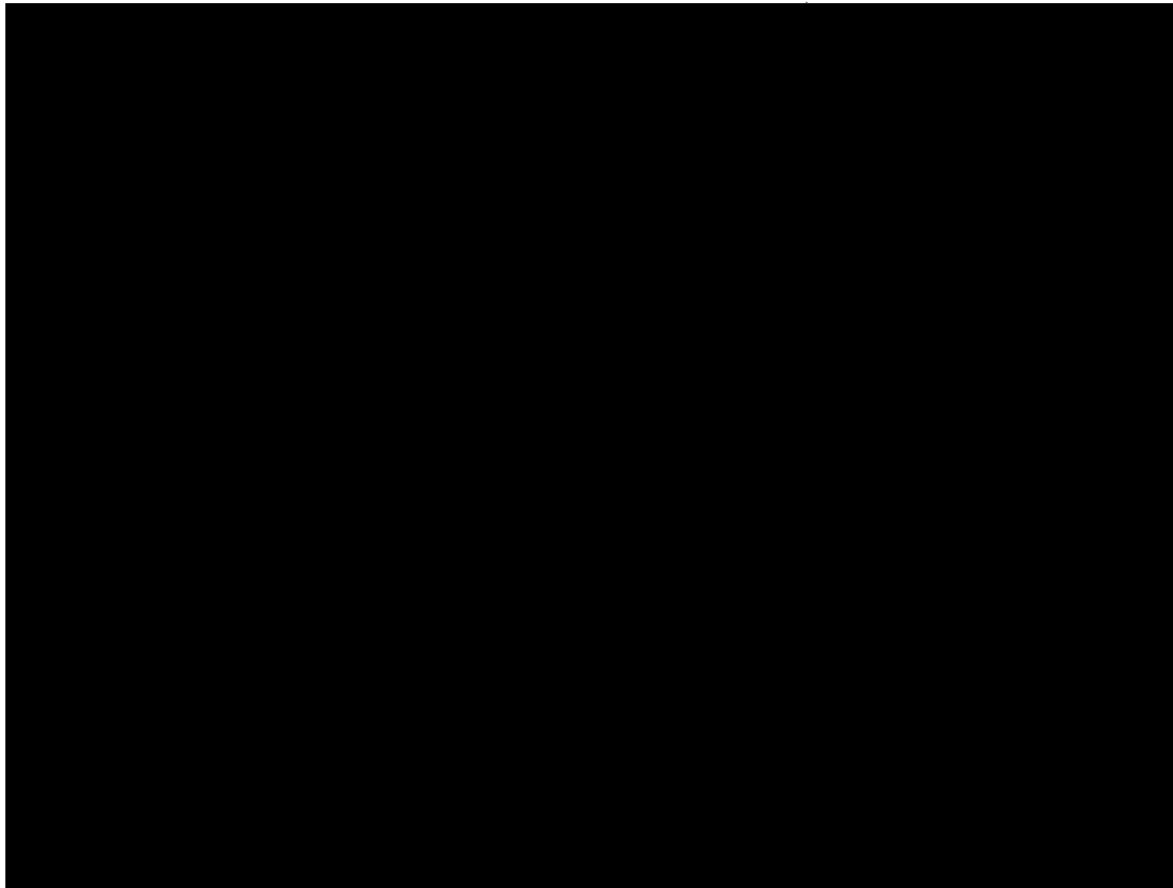
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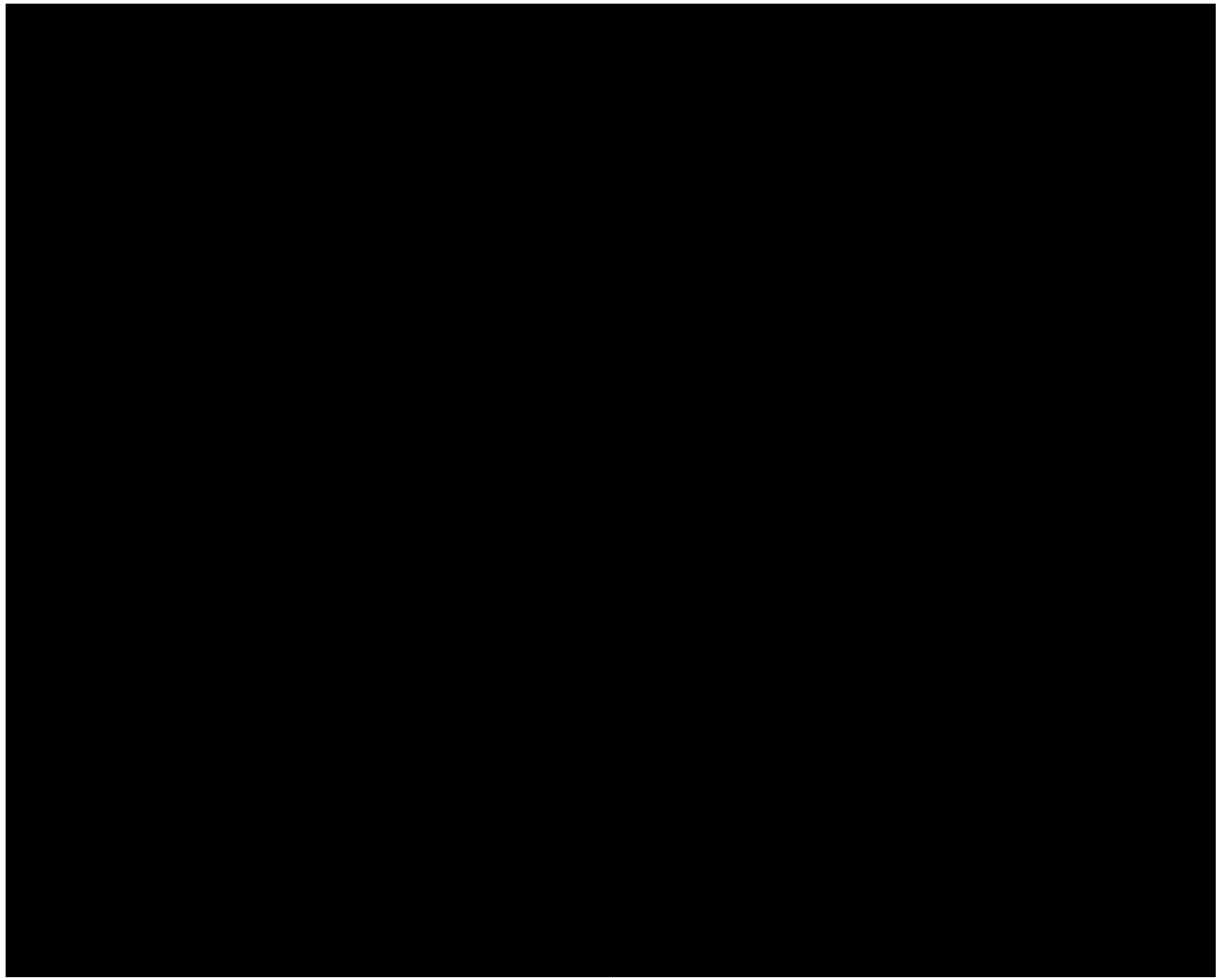
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Sino-Soviet Relations: *Restoring Appearances*

The arrival of the newly appointed Chinese ambassador, Liu Hsin-chuan, in Moscow this weekend caps recent efforts by both sides to return to a routine, businesslike atmosphere in state relations. Liu's appointment, which has been rumored for months, was only confirmed on 18 November when Peking announced he was present during the first meeting between Chou En-lai and the new Soviet ambassador, V. S. Tolstikov, who arrived in China six weeks ago.

Both countries have publicly reaffirmed recently their interest in achieving a "normalization" of relations, but each has also characterized the other's statements as "only words" not followed by "actual deeds." Peking's message to the Soviet government on the 53rd anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution early this month claimed "differences of principle" should not hinder "effective measures" to settle "important outstanding questions in state relations." The Chinese adopted this line prior to the opening of the Peking talks last year and probably repeated it to avoid being branded as "obstructionists" by the Soviets who continued to publicly stress their "conciliatory" attitude by conspicuously reproducing an edited version of the Chinese statement. A speech on 6 November by Politburo

member Suslov marking the anniversary had a more austere tone, however, reminding Peking that fundamental ideological differences cannot be compromised.

Although the improved climate reflects both sides' determination to sustain the diminished tensions along the border, it is unlikely that it presages movement toward resolution of specific differences. The announcement on 22 November that an "agreement on the exchange of goods and payments" had been signed in Peking by the respective vice ministers of foreign trade is symbolic of current Sino-Soviet relations. Although the protocol—the first since 1967—is a tangible indication of the "new atmosphere," omission of the period covered by the accord and Peking's remark that "the two sides will continue to exchange views" lend credence to reports of still unresolved problems. Moreover, both Soviet and Chinese representatives have recently stated that the Peking political talks continue stalemated, with less frequent meetings reduced to exchanges of position papers. The border-river navigation talks, which began last July, also continue without any sign of agreement. ■